

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated December 7, 2006. In the Office Action, claims 1-4, 6-11, 14, 15, 17 and 18 are rejected and claims 5, 12, 13 and 16 are withdrawn from consideration as being a non-elected species. With this Amendment, claim 4 is amended.

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 14-15 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Klein (US 3,857,645) in view of Klein (US 3,988,852). According to §2142 of the MPEP, the prior art references when combined must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination must be found in the prior art and not based on Applicants' disclosure. It is respectfully submitted that even if the Klein '645 could be combined with Klein '852, the combination of cited references fail to teach or suggest all of the claim elements of independent claims 1, 14 and 18. In particular, the combination of cited references fail to teach or suggest "a male connector having first and second opposite ends and a longitudinal axis, the second end connected to a second fishing line section and the first end configured for coaxial insertion into the opening of the female connector" as claimed in claim 1, "providing a male connector having first and second opposite ends and a longitudinal axis, the second end connected to a second fishing line section and the first end configured for coaxial insertion into the opening of the female connector" as claimed in claim 14 and "providing a second fishing line section connected to a male connector, the male connector being connected to the female connector" as claimed in claim 18.

On page three of the Office Action, the Examiner states that "it would have been obvious to provide Klein '645 with a male connector to replace the knot in the line since merely one equivalent connector is being replaced by another and the function is the same." The Examiner points to shank 41 and barbs 51 of Klein '852 as showing a male connector. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's analysis. If one were to replace the shank 41 and barbs 51 of Klein '852 with the knot in Klein '645, one would not show all of the elements of the independent claims 1, 14 and 18.

Specifically, shank 41 and barbs 51 are for connecting a fishing line S to a hook H. Shank 41 and barbs 51 provide a connection, however, neither Klein '645 nor Klein '852 teach or suggest a connector that is connected to a second fishing line. Even if Klein '645 and Klein '852 were combined, there is no teaching or suggestion of connecting a second fishing line F (Klein '645) to the shank 41 and barbs 51 of Klein '852. Therefore, the shank 41 and barbs 51 of Klein '852 are not an equivalent connector having similar function to that which is disclosed in Applicants' application.

The combination of cited references also fails to teach or suggest a deformable male connector that deforms to allow the male connector past an interior feature of a female connector as claimed in claims 1 and 14. In response to arguments section on page four of the Office Action, the Examiner states that there needs to be some deformation in barbs 51 of Klein '852 and the female connector of Klein '852 such that shank 41 can be properly inserted. Applicants respectfully disagree with this assumption. In col. 4, lines 29-32 of Klein '852, it is taught that the socket 46 of body 45 can be slightly smaller than the diameter of shank 41 so that the body 45 will stretch to produce a desirable fit for the shank 41. There is no teaching or suggestion that the shank or the barbs thereon deform.

It is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1, 14 and 18 are in condition for allowance. In addition, claims 2-4, 6-8 and 15 are in condition for allowance as depending on allowable base claims. Claim 4 is amended to delete redundant language in accordance with the Examiner's Response to Arguments section on page four of the Office Action.

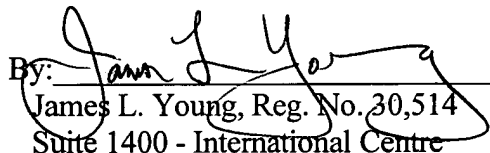
Claims 9-11 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Klein '645 in view of Klein '852 and further in view of Boyer (US 2,784,518). It is respectfully submitted that claims 9, 11 and 17 are in condition for allowance as depending on allowable base claims.

In view of the above comments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully requested.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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